

April 1968 OB Conference

2 May 68      Memo to DCI re Results of Community Negotiations on  
                  Enemy Strengths in South Vietnam

27 May 68     Adams memo to IG, CIA, re Complaints About Research on  
                  the Viet Cong

3 May 68      Walsh Memo of Conversation re 3 May 68 meeting called  
                  by General Wheeler in response to Mr. Helms' offer  
                  to brief the Chairman on the community problems in  
                  estimating enemy strengths.

2 May 68      Helms to Rostow memo re Estimates of Enemy Strength in  
                  South Vietnam

27 May 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Inspector General, Central Intelligence Agency  
SUBJECT : Complaints About Research on the Viet Cong

1. Please accept my apologies for the delay in forwarding this memorandum, which I promised to send you after our conversation of 3 April 1968.

2. The conversation persuaded me that I had both immediate and basic complaints. The latter call into question the overall conduct of intelligence research on the Vietnam war.

Pressing Complaints

3. The immediate grievances concern the state of research on the Viet Cong infrastructure, generally regarded as the most important part of the Communist apparatus in South Vietnam. The Deputy Directorate of Intelligence (DDI) has yet to assign anyone full time to conduct systematic research on the infrastructure. Although some research is being done in Saigon on the infrastructure, by MACV, ICEX, and the CIA Station, it is largely uncoordinated and, in the case of the MACV Political Order of Battle component, principally directed at collecting names.

4. As a result, the CIA is incapable of discussing intelligently several topics of current importance. Since no coherent research has been done on the large and well-organized Viet Cong Military Proselytizing apparatus, for example, we are unable to inform policymakers on the extent to which enemy proselytizers have been able to cause or take advantage of demoralization in the South Vietnamese Army, which in some areas seems to be dangerously weak. Nor, for the same reason, can we discuss in detail the operations of the Viet Cong Political Struggle organization as it attempts to sow discord in the society and government of South Vietnam.

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5. I recommend that the DDI assign at once several--say, half a dozen--full time analysts to investigate systematically and in detail the organization and methods of operation of the Communist infrastructure. Such research should be done in cooperation with the field and with the DDP, under the direction of a person with a working knowledge of the infrastructure.

Basic Complaints

6. The present failings of intelligence research stem from longstanding mismanagement. I level four basic charges. There has been:

First, a misuse of research manpower,

Second, a misdirection of research effort,

Third, a want of courage in advancing well-documented findings concerning Viet Cong manpower,

and

Fourth, a lethargy in correcting past failures.

Charge One

7. The CIA has been inept in its allocation of research manpower. The DDI did not assign a full-time researcher to work on our southern adversaries until late 1966, about a year and a half after our massive military intervention in the South. "Task forces" formed and dissolved, individual analysts studied the southern enemy sporadically, but the detailed research necessary for coherent intelligence was not done because virtually no one was assigned to do it. A study group to conduct basic research on the Viet Cong was not formed until August 1967.

8. Explanations advanced to excuse the phenomenon are inadequate. One excuse, that there was a "lack of manpower" to do detailed research, is absurd. A second excuse, that the DDI Collation Branch (now called the Research and Analysis Branch) in Saigon was designed to do

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in-depth research on the enemy, was undercut by the statements of a high-level DDI official last summer, who said that Branch's purpose was a) to provide a training ground for future DDI analysts, and b) to "support the Station." Until late 1967, the Branch received almost no direction or communications from headquarters.

Charge Two

9. The misdirection of research effort has taken at least three forms:

- a. A relative neglect of research on the Viet Cong political apparatus.
- b. An underemphasis of basic research on the enemy.
- c. A relative neglect, until very recently, of primary sources on the enemy, such as captured documents, POW reports, and RAND interviews.

10. Although it is commonly said that the war in Vietnam is "political," the civilian research community, in studying the enemy, has devoted most of its energies to reporting the operations of his army, while largely neglecting his political apparatus. The DDI, for example, has written only one detailed memorandum on the infrastructure,\* leaving to MACV the production of the best single work on Communist organization.\*\* The neglect of political intelligence on the southern enemy has resulted in an all-too-frequent misunderstanding at higher levels of the nature of the war. The misunderstanding is usually coupled with a dismay that we seem to be losing a struggle in which our military forces are demonstrably superior to those of the enemy.

\*The Organization, Activities and Objectives of the Communist Front in South Vietnam, CIA, 26 September 1966, an update of a memorandum written a year earlier.

\*\*The Viet Cong Political Infrastructure, CICV, May 1966.

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11. Part of the reason for the neglect of the enemy's political apparatus has been an underemphasis of basic research, which might have demonstrated political organization's importance. Until very recently, most of our intelligence production on the enemy in the south was oriented towards "current intelligence," or in responding to short-term requests. Basic research on the enemy's organization, manpower and dynamics was left to such organizations as MACV or RAND. Such deferrals of responsibility seem inexcusable, since it has been clear for some time that MACV's reporting has left much to be desired. For example, its Order of Battle carried the number of Viet Cong irregulars at exactly 103,573 between late 1964 and May 1966, and the number of "political cadres" at precisely 39,175 from late 1964 until well into 1967.

12. The dearth of basic research has had a number of unfortunate consequences. By far the worst was that the intelligence community vastly underestimated the strength of the enemy and therefore the scale of the Vietnamese war. It was not discovered until late 1966, for example, after a most cursory examination of the evidence, that we had underestimated the number of organized Viet Cong by close to 100%. Likewise, we did not find out until late 1967 and early 1968 that estimates of recruiting and infiltration were probably far too low. A second consequence was that CIA attempts to penetrate the infrastructure have met with scant success, in part because we knew so little about what we were operating against.\*

13. A corollary of the neglect of basic research has been--until very recently--a relative inattention to captured documents, POW reports and RAND interviews. Although

\*To put this consequence in perspective, it should be noted that an ignorance of the target organization is only one of the reasons for the overall failure of CIA espionage operations in Vietnam. Another more obvious cause, not specifically related to the problem of intelligence research discussed in this paper, has been that the number of Agency case officers in the field who could speak Vietnamese has always been considerably less than half a dozen.

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several offices "scanned" the documents, none assigned analysts to read them full-time until the middle of 1967. Since it takes several months to build up enough experience to read captured documents properly, coherent intelligence based on primary sources has only just begun to flow.

Charge Three

14. When the CIA (or specifically, the DDI) discovered in late 1966 that the evidence strongly suggested the size of the enemy forces in South Vietnam had been badly underestimated, its apparent reaction was to sweep the discovery under the rug. The want of mettle continued until at least 30 January 1968, the day the Tet offensive began.

15. Its reaction in the latter half of 1966 to a series of memoranda concerning Viet Cong manpower--a subject on which I have specialized since early 1966--was highly unusual. For example:

- a. A draft memorandum written on 21 August suggesting that MACV was underestimating the strength of the Viet Cong irregulars by at least 100% was returned to me with virtually no comment. A second, unrequested, version of the memorandum was finally published on 8 September 1966 in limited edition as a "draft working paper." I doubt that it would have been issued even in this form had I not insisted at length, and in the face of what seemed to me considerable reluctance on the part of the DDI front offices.
- b. A draft memorandum of early December 1966 suggesting that MACV had underestimated the number of Communist service troops in South Vietnam by over 500% was returned to me with no indication that MACV had been told of a possible discrepancy. I doubt that MACV would have been so informed had I not insisted in mid-December that a cable be sent to the DDI representative in Saigon requesting that he tell MACV about the questions the memorandum raised. (The cable also questioned the accuracy of MACV estimates of the number of "political cadres.")

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c. A memorandum written in the fourth quarter of 1966 concerning Viet Cong irregulars suggesting that their strength was "250,000--300,000 or more" (instead of the 112,760 then carried in MACV's Order of Battle) was killed by the DDI in February 1967 for the stated reason that MACV was about to publish a new set of irregular figures. MACV did not do so until October. The memorandum--some 60 pages long, with over 80 footnotes, most referring to captured documents--is still the most comprehensive single work written on Viet Cong irregulars.

16. The timidity continued throughout 1967. For example, strength estimates contained in various drafts of National Intelligence Estimate 14.3-67 (concerning the Viet Cong's ability to continue) were progressively lowered from the Estimate's first draft of 14 June 1967 until it was finally published in November. (See comments on the last draft, attached.) The final version followed "agreements" in Saigon in September between CIA, DIA and MACV, concerning enemy strength figures. The "agreements" primarily consisted of a series of capitulations by CIA representatives to MACV.

17. There have been some exceptions to the overall pattern. In January 1967, for example, the Board of National Estimates indicated in a memorandum that the size of the Viet Cong irregular forces was larger than had been hitherto estimated; and in May 1967, the CIA published a limited-distribution memorandum which estimated the overall numbers of Viet Cong at some 500,000. Neither exception directly challenged MACV figures, however. When a direct confrontation occurred in September 1967, CIA retreated.

18. Since 30 January 1968, the day the enemy Tet offensive began, the CIA has apparently determined to confront MACV on strength estimates. The show of pluck, it appears to me, came too late.

Charge Four

19. Although some of the deficiencies noted in the previous paragraphs have been partially righted, the pace of reform has been glacial.

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20. Production elements of the DDI have been lethargic in assigning full-time analysts to work on the southern Viet Cong:

- a. The Office of Research and Reports did not do so until September 1966. The assigned analyst worked with only minimal direction until August 1967, when a South Vietnam Branch was created under the newly-organized Office of Economic Research. The branch chief, although competent, had no experience working on the Viet Cong.
- b. The Office of Current Intelligence had no one studying the Viet Cong full-time until December 1967. The person then assigned, although competent, had had no previous experience working on Vietnam. Until then, OCI's Indo-China Division--several of whose analysts had worked on occasion on the Viet Cong--was not organized in such a way as to allow for systematic study of the enemy in the South.
- c. The Office of Strategic Research, by charter, does not work on the Vietnam problem.

21. The lethargy occurred despite frequent prodding. For example:

- a. In mid-January 1967, the Staff for the Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs (SAVA) sent a memorandum to the DDI recommending that the DDI conduct research with all "deliberate speed" on the neglected portions of the OB. The DDI did not begin such research until December 1967.
- b. In May 1967, a draft memorandum written in SAVA pointed out that the CIA paid insufficient attention to captured documents. The memorandum received virtually no distribution, and systematic exploitation of the documents did not begin until late 1967.

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c. In August 1967, a draft memorandum written in SAVA recommended the formation of a Viet Cong research group to study the enemy's infrastructure. As yet, no such group has been formed, and DDI study on the infrastructure is at a virtual standstill.

General Comments

22. History will probably record that one of the principle reasons the United States became mired in the Vietnam war was a failure in intelligence. We did not realize what we were getting into, did not know what we were looking at when we got there, and are only now discovering the consequences of our ignorance and myopia. Certain medium and low-level intelligence officials familiar with Vietnam warned what might happen, but their warnings were too often disregarded, or drowned in the babble of the uninformed.

23. Once the US was heavily involved in Vietnam--one might remember that over 10,000 American soldiers were there in 1962--the lack of foresight in developing a coherent body of research on the southern enemy became inexcusable. In failing to do its homework, the research community has allowed its country, with inadequate warning, to sink deeper and deeper into the Vietnamese mire, with increasingly little hope of honorable extrication. The disservice came about because of sloth, timidity, and bad scholarship.

Specific Requests

24. In view of the gravity of the charges, and my desire to get them aired, I respectfully submit four specific requests:

a. That the Inspectorate General take steps to initiate a thorough investigation of the charges to determine their merit, and that I be apprised, in writing, of progress towards this end.

b. That copies of this memorandum be forwarded to appropriate members of the White House Staff, and to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, and that I be informed, in writing, when this is done.

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c. That copies of this memorandum be forwarded to the Office of the Director and to the Office of the Deputy Director of Intelligence, and that I be informed, in writing, when this is done.

d. That the Inspector General provide me with a modest amount of safe-space for the safekeeping of relevant memoranda which have been collected over the past two years.

25. I would hope that any investigation would result in recommendations on how to prevent a repetition of circumstances that prompted this memorandum.

26. I respectfully await your reply.

[Redacted]

Samuel A. Adams  
OER/I/SV

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Attachment

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3 May 1968

## MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: CIA: The Director, Mr. Richard Helms  
Mr. Paul V. Walsh

JCS: The Chairman, General Earle G. Wheeler  
Lt. Gen. George S. Brown  
Executive Col. D.P. McAuliffe  
Maj. Gen. William E. Depuy  
Col. A. C. Edmunds

DIA: The Director, General Joseph Carroll

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1. This meeting convened at 1030 on 3 May 1968. It was called by General Wheeler in response to Mr. Helms' offer to brief the Chairman on the community problems in estimating enemy strengths.

2. Mr. Helms opened the meeting by explaining generally the inability of the intelligence community to reach agreement on estimates of enemy strengths in South Vietnam. He pointed out that in addition to differences in estimates on agreed OB categories, there was a fundamental difference on whether certain categories of forces -- the so-called irregular groups -- should be quantified and included in the estimates.

3. Mr. Walsh gave a brief run-down on the CIA concept of an insurgency base and the elements contained in it, and presented a comparison of the CIA and MACV estimates.

4. General Carroll and Mr. Walsh discussed the various problem areas in the estimates, the points of disagreement and possible alternatives for their resolution.

5. The consensus of the meeting is summarized in the following points:

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Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
declassification

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a. These estimates have a high degree of political sensitivity and all concerned should exercise the utmost discretion in dealing with them and controlling their dissemination.

b. There is a real need to present these estimates in such a way that the combat threat is clearly distinguished from political or irregular threats. The qualitative differences within groups should also be considered and probably new terminology needs to be created.

c. The disagreement on some elements -- e.g., Political Infrastructure -- could probably be eliminated if the terms were redefined.

d. The current method of attrition, its shortcomings, and the impact this has on maintaining strength estimates is in need of a basic overhaul.

e. The requirement that monthly OB reports be published is a basic contributor to the confusion and problems associated with strength estimates.

6. General Carroll was instructed to draft for General Wheeler's signature a message to MACV indicating that there are a number of soft areas in the estimates which warrant immediate investigation, and making the following points:

a. MACV should examine the entire question of attrition with a view to devising better methods.

b. Consideration should be given to differentiating the combat threat between full-time and part-time guerrillas.

c. Consideration should be given to the best means of presenting and quantifying the elements not included in the military OB.

d. The question of definition of Political Infrastructure should be reexamined.

7. It was agreed that all concerned must go back to the drawing board and that CIA and DIA would cooperate fully in working out new formats and definitions and resolving existing differences.

8. Mr. Helms agreed that he would withhold dissemination of the CIA figures pending completion of this reexamination.

9. General Wheeler agreed to take steps to reduce MACV's OB reporting requirements, particularly those generated by OSD/SA.

PAUL V. WALSH  
Deputy Director  
Economic Research

Distribution:

Orig. - DCI

1 - DDI

2 - OD/OER

1 - Ch/D/I, Ch/I/SV

OD/OER: PVWalsh: [redacted] May 68)

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2 May 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
THROUGH : Deputy Director for Intelligence  
SUBJECT : Results of Community Negotiations  
on Enemy Strengths in South  
Vietnam

1. This memorandum is to report the results of the recent intelligence conference and subsequent negotiations with DIA on the strength of enemy forces in South Vietnam.

2. As directed by you the CIA draft assessment of enemy strengths was presented to a conference with representatives from DIA, MACV, CINCPAC, State, NSA and observers from the military services and OSD. The conference meetings were held from 10 to 16 April 1968, and several additional meetings were held with DIA.\* The views of each participant were discussed at length and the CIA draft was subjected to detailed examination and comment. Much of the criticism was constructive and beneficial, enabling the CIA delegation to make several changes in its estimate.

3. Despite these changes the difference in views could not be reconciled. Our revised and best estimate of enemy forces in South Vietnam for the two dates discussed at the conference is shown in the Table on page 4.

4. Our estimate presents enemy strengths in three major categories -- Combat Forces, Irregular Forces, and Political Infrastructure. We view these categories as composing the enemy's organized insurgency base and estimate their number to be in the range of 450,000 to 600,000 persons. MACV, CINCPAC, and DIA do not accept the concept of an insurgency base. They have figures only for the Combat Forces and Political Infrastructure which they estimated to be from 280,000 to 330,000 persons on 31 March 1968.

\* A report on the conference and the positions of each participating agency are attached as Annexes A, B, and C.

5. The differences between the CIA and the military intelligence estimates vary from category to category as follows:

*Combat Forces:* The CIA estimate for Combat Forces on 31 March 1968 is 265,000 to 335,000, compared with military estimates of 203,000 to 243,000. Within the category most of the difference is accounted for by our higher estimates for Administrative Services and Guerrillas as shown below:

Combat Forces	Thousand Persons	
	CIA	MACV/CINCPAC/DIA
Main and Local	125 to 145	120 to 140
Administrative Services	60 to 80	35 to 40
Guerrillas	80 to 110	70 to 80

Although DIA has stayed with the MACV figures for Administrative Services, it has indicated that at least 10,000 to 20,000 probably should be added to the MACV estimate and that further consideration should be given to Administrative Service personnel located in the border areas of Laos, Cambodia, and the DMZ.

*Irregular Forces:* CIA estimates these forces to be in the range of 90,000 to 140,000 persons including 80,000 to 120,000 Self Defense forces and 10,000 to 20,000 Assault Youth. Both MACV and CINCPAC feel that these forces cannot and should not be quantified. DIA feels that a decision to quantify them is a policy matter but that if such a decision were made the CIA figures should be reasonable best estimates.

*Political Infrastructure:* CIA estimates this category to include 85,000 to 115,000 persons as of 31 March 1968, including 75,000 to 85,000 professional cadre and 10,000 to 30,000 full time workers in supporting staffs. MACV, CINCPAC, and DIA concur with the CIA estimate for professional cadre but do not believe that the personnel in supporting staffs should be considered as part of the Political Infrastructure.

6. The use and characterization of these figures remains a serious problem. The military services would prefer to include only those elements listed under combat forces -- 225,000 to 260,000 -- as representing enemy strengths. We agree that this number represents the prime combat threat but prefer to use the total insurgency base of 450,000 to 600,000 as the best estimate of enemy strengths. We feel most strongly that the total figure is the one that most accurately describes the enemy forces that are the main target and concern of those charged with the military and political resolution of the Vietnam problem. For, in addition to regular combat forces, the total insurgency base includes those organized groups that actively support regular combat troops, provide manpower inputs to regular units, sustain casualties from Allied attacks and, in turn, inflict casualties on Allied forces. The inclusion of all elements, therefore, is essential to meaningful and useful intelligence appraisals.

7. The choice of numbers and groups to be included in any presentation will vary, of course, according to the threat that is being described. Almost any choice presents delicate political problems. We would have to be meticulous in describing the precise functions and relative effectiveness of each element since there are substantial qualitative differences among them. The form in which these figures should be presented in any public statements and decisions as to inclusions or exclusions of particular categories are beyond our domain.

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PAUL V. WALSH  
Deputy Director  
Economic Research

Attachment:  
Conference Report with  
Annexes

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Strength Estimate of the Organized  
Insurgency Base in South Vietnam\*

	Thousand Persons	
	<u>1 January 1968</u>	<u>31 March 1968</u>
<u>Combat Forces</u>		
Main and Local	120 to 140	125 to 145
Administrative Services	60 to 80	60 to 80
Guerrillas	80 to 120	80 to 110
Sub-total	<u>260 to 340</u>	<u>265 to 335</u>
<u>Irregular Forces</u>		
Self Defense	80 to 120	80 to 120
Assault Youth	10 to 20	10 to 20
Sub-total	<u>90 to 140</u>	<u>90 to 140</u>
<u>Political Infrastructure</u>		
Professional Cadre	80 to 90	75 to 85
Supporting Staffs	10 to 30	10 to 30
Sub-total	<u>90 to 120</u>	<u>85 to 115</u>

\* The methodologies used for deriving these estimates are presented in Annex E.

ANNEX A

REPORT ON THE CONFERENCE ON  
DCI ASSESSMENT OF ENEMY STRENGTHS  
10-16 April 1968

I. Purpose of the Conference

The conference was convened at the request of the Director of Central Intelligence as a result of increasing concern that current estimates of the strength of enemy forces are understated, are too restrictive in scope, and do not properly account for enemy manpower losses.

As a result of both his concern and that of the White House, Mr. Helms had directed his staff to prepare an assessment of enemy strength that he, as the Director of Central Intelligence, could issue as a formal statement of his views. This conference was called in order that this assessment could receive the full benefit of the advice and comment of the responsible components of DIA, CINCPAC, MACV and other concerned services and agencies. It was the hope of the Director of Central Intelligence that in this process the conference would be able to develop an agreed community estimate. It was also anticipated that the participants would be able to devise an acceptable definition of the elements to be included in the assessment and a satisfactory method for determining their numbers.

II. Participants

The principal participants in the conference were representatives of the Department of State, the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, COMUSMACV, and CINCPAC. Observers from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Comptroller, and the military services were also present. A list of the delegates and observers is attached to this report as Annex D.

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III. Conference Results and Recommendations

The conference provided a full opportunity for a frank exchange of views by all representatives. As a result of the evidence presented at the conference, all parties were able to make some adjustments in their pre-conference estimates. Nevertheless, the conference failed to reach an agreed community estimate of the strength of enemy forces.

The differences in estimates of total enemy strength are shown in the following tabulation:

Estimates of Total Enemy Strength <u>a/</u> (Thousand Persons)		
	<u>CIA <u>b/</u></u>	<u>MACV/CINCPAC/DIA</u>
1 January 1968	440 to 600	305 to 340
31 March 1968	440 to 590	278 to 328

a. The MACV/CINCPAC/DIA estimates do not include all categories of forces estimated by CIA nor would they add the military and political elements together.

b. The Department of State concurs in the CIA estimates. The National Security Agency agreed with the CIA methodology and position but feels it lacks the data base and research staff to provide an independent estimate of the strength of enemy forces.

The positions of all representatives on each element of the CIA estimates are presented in IV, below. The MACV/CINCPAC and DIA positions were also discussed at length during the conference and position statements prepared by these representatives are attached as Annexes B and C.

The question of methodologies for attriting enemy forces and the base that should be attrited were discussed at length by the conference. CIA and the other Washington-based delegations expressed reservations about MACV's method of accounting for gains and losses and its adequacy

for providing current estimates of total enemy strengths. Because of the complexity of this problem no agreement could be reached at this conference. MACV did agree, however, to provide the Washington community with a pilot study demonstrating how losses and gains are handled in Saigon. The Washington community will examine this study and then enter into discussions with MACV of any apparent problems in the methodology and possible means of correcting or improving the model. (For the methodology used by CIA in deriving its estimates, see Annex E.)

The discussion during the conference was particularly fruitful in identifying problem areas that account for many of the differences among members of the intelligence community. The following recommendations were unanimously agreed by the conference and their implementation should facilitate elimination of some basic problems and differences in estimates.

1. Need for an All-Source Order of Battle - The unit holdings in a collateral Order of Battle (OB) based on rigid acceptance criteria will always lag behind those in an all-source OB. Over the long term, these differences tend to be eliminated, but they can be highly significant in terms of current estimates of enemy strength. Although they amounted to only slightly more than 4,000 troops for the two dates considered by the conference, the differences have been well over 20,000 at various times during the first quarter of 1968. The conference, therefore, recommends unanimously that MACV undertake to maintain a COMINT supplement to its OB holdings and that this supplement be transmitted to Washington on a periodic basis. The conference also recommends that effective procedures be established so that both headquarters and field commands can make inputs to this supplement.

2. Out-of-Country Threat - The conference also agreed that there is a continuing need for better and more timely estimates of the threat represented by enemy forces located in areas contiguous to South Vietnam. It recommended, therefore, that MACV undertake steps to define this threat and to provide recurring estimates of its size and significance.

3. Infiltration - The conference agreed that present methods for handling infiltration data account for much of the lag in OB holdings and consequently in estimates of enemy strength. It recommended, therefore, that MACV, in conjunction with NSA, take steps to provide more meaningful and timely estimates of infiltration and their incorporation into estimates of enemy strength.

4. Publication - Much of the confusion and apparent inconsistencies in OB holdings and estimates of enemy strength result from requirements that these data be published on a monthly basis in great detail and with unwarranted specificity. These detailed monthly reports are invaluable to working analysis and for briefing purposes. Their publication, however, creates unnecessary problems and leads to erroneous judgments because of the frequent and sharp fluctuations in end-of-the-month figures. The conference recommends strongly that these publication practices be discontinued and that consumers be requested to settle for reasonable spreads in OB and strength estimates.

IV. Summary of Positions Taken on the CIA Draft Presentations of Enemy Strengths in South Vietnam

A. General

All conferees agreed that the assessment of enemy strengths is a difficult estimative problem. The information base is spotty and varies significantly for each category of the estimate, and the methodologies which must be used do not permit extremely firm and narrow-ranged estimates to be made.

All conferees agreed that any assessment should include a careful and deliberate identification of the relative hardness and softness of each element of the assessment. Moreover, the conference agreed that any assessment should carefully describe qualitative as well as quantitative trends and that the relative quality of all elements should be clearly described.

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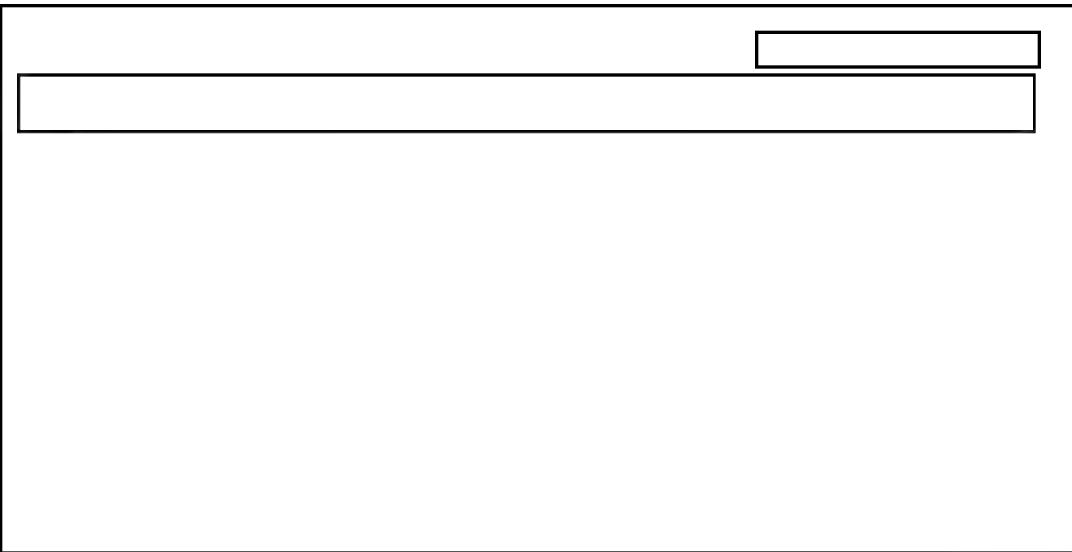
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STATE: Agreed to the CIA position.

NSA: Agreed with the CIA assessment but does not have an independent capability to make estimates.

C. Administrative Services

CIA: The proposed CIA range of 75,000 to 100,000 represented a rounding of an estimate of 85,000 Administrative Service troops. This range was adopted because of the tenuous nature of much of the evidence and uncertainties about some of the components of the estimate. The CIA estimate also includes a number of troops serving out-of-country but subordinate to headquarters elements operating in the South. In the discussion of the estimate, a case was made that CIA might well have used too high a ratio of Administrative Service Forces to Combat Forces. For this reason and because of the fact that its estimate might include some troops out-of-country and not subordinate to in-country headquarters, CIA lowered its estimate to a range of 60,000 to 80,000 as of 1 January 1968. CIA estimates that any net gains or losses during the first quarter of 1968 are well within its estimative range. CIA also estimates that any losses during the period were probably made up by the heavy infiltration observed during the quarter.

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ANNEX D

LIST OF DELEGATES TO CONFERENCE ON DCI  
ASSESSMENT OF ENEMY STRENGTH  
10-16 APRIL 1968

SAIGON

Colonel Daniel O. Graham, USA (Chief of Dele-  
gation)  
Colonel Paul Weiler, USMC  
Cmdr. James A. Meacham, USN  
1st Lt. Kelly L. Robinson, USA

HONOLULU

Lt. Colonel George M. Hamscher, USA  
Lt. Colonel James S. Wilson, USMC

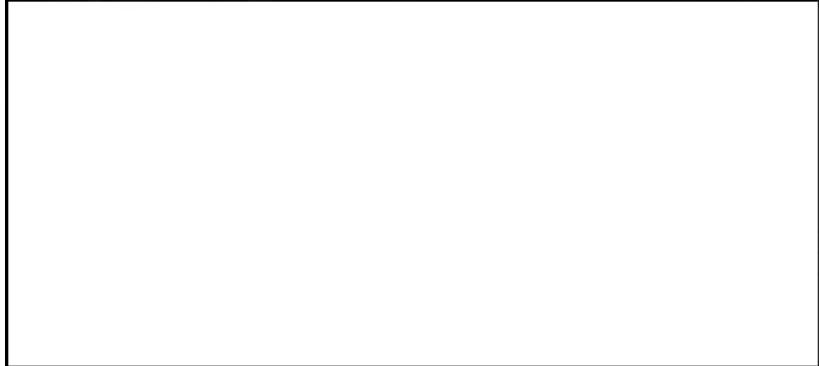
OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, COMPTROLLER

Jerry E. Bush\*

DIA

Major General Grover C. Brown\*  
Captain Walter N. Morgan, USN (Chief of  
Delegation)

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\* Observers

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SERVICES\*

ARMY - Major Joseph R. Dinda  
NAVY - Cmdr. Roy L. Beavers  
MARINE - Lt. Colonel Edward W. Dzialo  
          Lt. Colonel Neil B. Mills  
AIR FORCE - Lt. Colonel Scott S. Porter  
          Captain Richard L. Bohannon  
          (alternate)

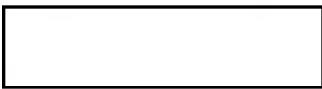
STATE

Daily representation from among the following:

Louis G. Sarris  
Richard W. Teare  
James H. Cheatham  
Stephen R. Lyne  
Joseph H. Weiss

NSA

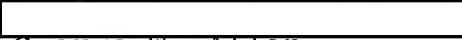
25X1



CIA

25X1

Paul V. Walsh (Chief of Delegation)



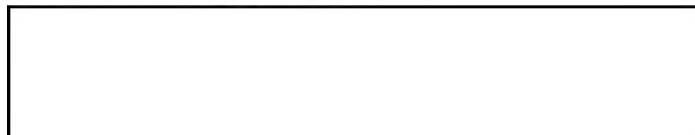
25X1

George W. Allen



25X1

Samuel A. Adams



\* Observers

<sup>29</sup>  
~~SECRET~~

25X1

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### OFFICIAL ROUTING SLIP

TO	NAME AND ADDRESS	DATE	INITIALS
1	<i>[REDACTED]</i>		
2	<i>Mr. Breckinridge</i>		
3			
4			
5			
6	<i>Ref to DD/DER</i>		
ACTION	DIRECT REPLY	PREPARE REPLY	
APPROVAL	DISPATCH	RECOMMENDATION	
COMMENT	FILE	RETURN	
CONCURRENCE	INFORMATION	SIGNATURE	

Remarks:

FOLD HERE TO RETURN TO SENDER

FROM: NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NO.

DATE

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